

REMARKS

Applicant submits this amendment to place the application in condition for allowance. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-19 are pending in the application. Claims 1-19 and 23 remain pending following entry of this response. Claims 1-2, 4, 6-9, 11 and 13-19 have been amended. New claim 23 has been added to recite aspects of the invention. Applicant submits that the amendments and new claim do not introduce new matter.

Interview Summary

On August 28, 2007, a telephonic interview was held between Gero G. McClellan, attorney of record, and Examiner Craig Walter. The parties discussed proposed amendments to the independent claims. The proposed amendments are reflected in this response. The parties agreed that the proposed amendments should overcome the art of record, but further consideration and/or searching would be needed. Accordingly, Applicant agreed to file this amendment with an RCE.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The following rejections are from the Final Office Action dated July 30, 2007.

Claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Muller* (U.S. Patent No. 6,044,418) in view of *Welch et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,735,633, hereinafter, "*Welch*"), and in further view of *Mammen* (U.S. Publication 2004/0047367).

Claims 6 and 8-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combined teachings of *Muller*, *Welch* and *Mammen*, and in further view of *Gil* (U.S. Publication 2004/0064664).

In light of the agreement reached during the telephonic interview with respect to the proposed amendments submitted herewith, Applicant believes that the present rejections are obviated. Therefore, the claims are believed to be allowable, and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Accordingly, it is believed that the present application now stands in condition for allowance, and an allowance of the claims is respectfully requested. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes any issues remain that prevent this application from going to issue, the Examiner is strongly encouraged to contact Gero McClellan, attorney of record, at (336) 643-3065, to discuss strategies for moving prosecution forward toward allowance.

Respectfully submitted, and
S-signed pursuant to 37 CFR 1.4,

/Gero G. McClellan, Reg. No. 44,227/

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